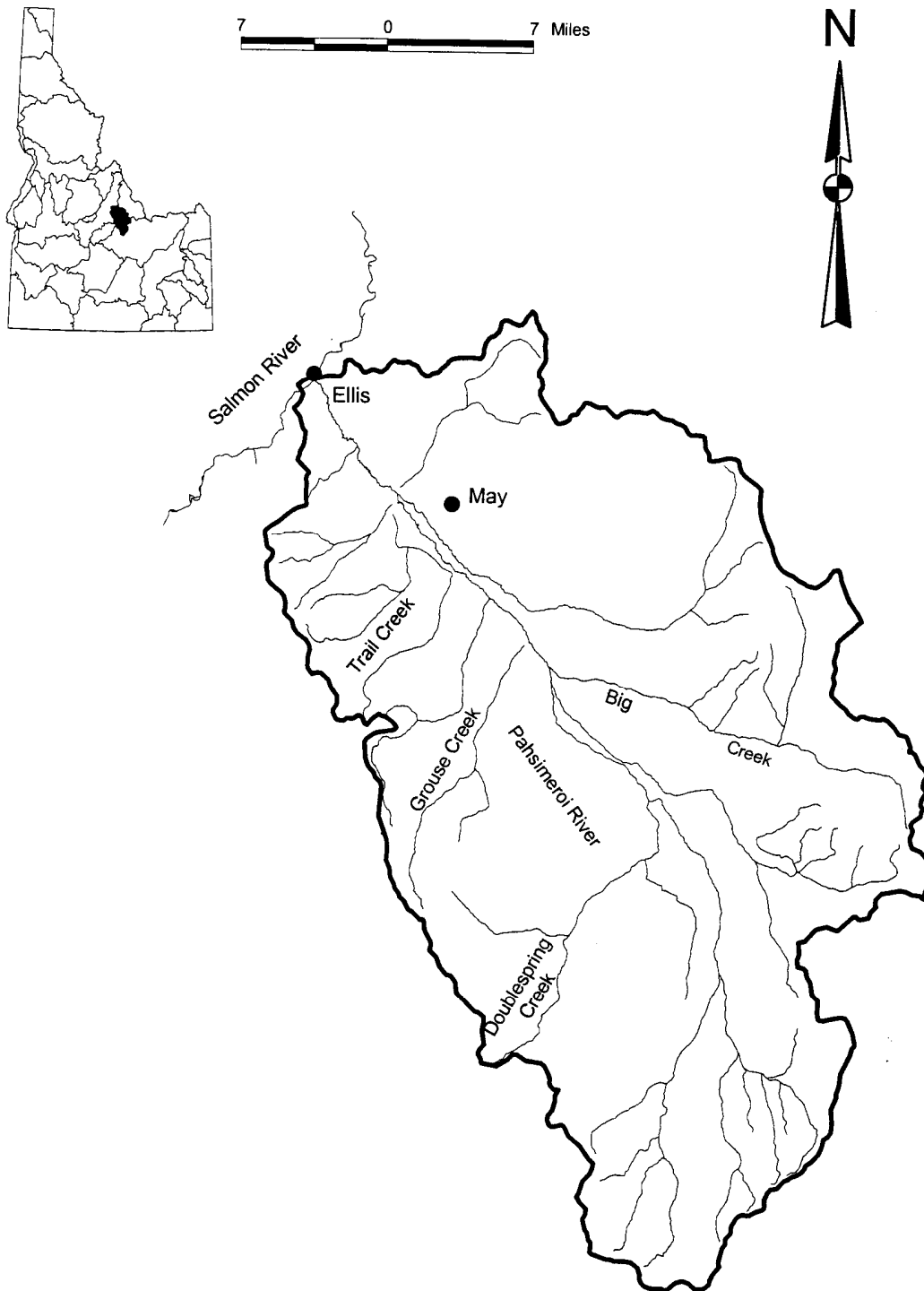


Pahsimeroi River Drainage



14. PAHSIMEROI RIVER DRAINAGE

A. Overview

At one time the Pahsimeroi River flowed 49 miles from the confluence of the East and West Forks to the Salmon River at river mile 304. The drainage is approximately 845 square miles. Similar to the Lemhi River, the Pahsimeroi Valley is mostly under private ownership and heavily irrigated (particularly in the lower drainage) for hay and grazing. All major tributaries are dewatered in the lower reaches and several river sections during the irrigation season and are inaccessible to all mainstem fish for spawning.

The Pahsimeroi Valley lies between the Lemhi and Lost River mountain ranges. Water percolates through the broad, pervious alluvial fan in the upper valley and enters the river through ground water and springs lower in the valley. Therefore, productivity in the river is higher than most streams in the upper Salmon River drainage.

A hatchery on the Pahsimeroi River, owned and funded by Idaho Power Company and operated by the Department, traps and rears summer chinook salmon and also traps A-run steelhead which are reared at fish hatcheries in the Hagerman Valley. The hatchery was constructed and is operated as mitigation for lost anadromous production from the Hells Canyon dam complex. The adult steelhead returning to the Pahsimeroi Hatchery contribute significantly to the steelhead fishery in the upper Salmon River.

Anadromous management action in the Pahsimeroi River will emphasize maintaining existing natural spawning populations of chinook and steelhead.

Resident fish species include rainbow trout, brook trout, bull trout, whitefish, and cutthroat trout.

B. Objectives and Programs

1. Objective: Maintain existing natural spawning populations of salmon and steelhead.

Program: Allow natural production to sustain existing, naturally producing populations. Limit outplanting of hatchery fish, other than direct hatchery releases, to support supplementation research and areas devoid of naturally producing salmon and steelhead.

2. Objective: Improve angler access to the Pahsimeroi River.

Program: Negotiate with landowners to establish fishing by permission, easements or purchases.

3. Objective: Minimize loss of juvenile salmon and steelhead to irrigation diversions on streams.

Program: Continue to upgrade existing screens, pursue consolidations, and install screens in remaining unscreened ditches.

4. Objective: Maintain and improve habitat quality of the throughout the Pahsimeroi River drainage.

Program: Continue to work cooperatively with willing landowners through the Upper Salmon River Model Watershed Project, in priority areas, to maintain and enhance critical spawning and rearing areas for resident and anadromous fishes. Pursue the reconnection of tributaries through improved irrigation delivery systems.

5. Objective: Manage for quality resident trout fishing in the mainstem Pahsimeroi River.

Program: Maintain protective fishing regulations on all cutthroat trout and rainbow trout less than 14 inches in the mainstem river.

| DRAINAGE: Pahsimeroi River | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| Water | Miles/acres | Fishery | | | Management direction |
| | | Type | Species present | Management | |
| Mainstem | 59/ | Coldwater Anadromous | Rainbow trout Brook trout Whitefish Steelhead Chinook salmon Cutthroat trout Bull trout | Quality Wild Conservation | Provide fishery for naturally produced trout over 14 inches and harvest of adipose fin-clipped residual steelhead. Maximize brook trout and whitefish yield. Closed to harvest. Trap sufficient numbers of hatchery chinook salmon and steelhead for production programs. |
| Tributaries | 227/ | Coldwater Anadromous | Rainbow trout Brook trout Whitefish Cutthroat trout Bull trout Steelhead Chinook salmon | Wild Conservation | Provide harvest fishery for naturally produced trout. Maximize brook trout and whitefish yield. Closed to harvest. Closed to adult harvest. |